N.W. China AF 13
Tu ren

there was little peace in and around the place. Every room of my 533
inn was filled, mostly with young men. By the light of the custom- 527
ary smoldering lamp dozens of them crowded around the coal braziers 563
which the innkeeper had set up, in their thick sheep furs, and sang part songs with melancholy trills and yodels and snickered and laughed and mocked the ones who were no good at it. All this lasted until morning. They were all happy like contented and very well brought up children. It was always long after midnight before the singers would gradually, one after another, fall silent. Then girls and boys would lean sleepily against one another and remain thus until the sun awakened them and they began their fun anew.

But I found it difficult to come closer to the Tu ren. They shyly 563
withdrew from me, avoided me wherever they met me, and many 609
of them obviously disdained me. To them, as to the Tibetans, a 123
stranger was uncanny and seemed to them an extremely dangerous creature who stands in close communion with death and the devil. Many of them had seen only few white men, some, none at all, and never one who wore Western clothes. /253/ On the other hand, much Chinese coolie gossip had reached their ears. They knew very definitely that our medicines are made of human hearts and children's bones. It took days of encouragement on my part and a great deal of baksheesh before I could get any of their legends and songs and persuade some of the men to let me photograph them and take anthropological measurements. It was particularly difficult because [511]
the Tu ren are largely well-to-do and intelligent farmers and because the harvests had been good in the preceding years. They said: "We do not understand why you want this, such a proposal has never been made to us and we do not need your money and your presents." The few men I was able to measure were extremely frightened and twitched at every single measurement. More than a dozen ran off at the first touch of the measuring instrument, as excited as though it were a matter of life and death. As for measuring Tu ren women, that remained a pious wish on my part. (They were usually around 1.5 meters tall.) They were all afraid that they would thereby become sterile for life. In a few years, when Europeans become more familiar to them it may be an easy matter to make up for my failure.

It is often said that the Mongoloid peoples and especially the 157
inhabitants of China are much more calm, stoical and self-controlled than we Europeans. I discovered the opposite to be the case. The Chinese very easily fly into uncontrollable fits of rage which makes them capable of almost anything. It is also well-known, of course, 000